

Alternative Healing Methods to Treat Allergies



Why Not Give Traditional Chinese Medicine A Try?

Shanghai's damp and dusty environment is a nightmare for many allergy and asthma sufferers, and spring brings a new round of suffering. There are millions of people who suffer from allergies every year and have tried plenty of medication to eradicate the symptoms, in vain. So why not find out how Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) tackles allergies with a natural approach?

In TCM, the spring season is associated with the element of wood. After a long, cold winter, the body is generally weak and vulnerable to external pathogenic factors such as the wind. Therefore, the meridians transporting the flow of Qi (energy) and lying under the skin are greatly exposed to the changing weather conditions. In TCM, a disease occurs due to the body's imbalance because of an improper flow of Qi or when the Qi is low.

TCM interprets allergies as a disharmony in the body. It is often diagnosed as a "wind" disease accompanied by another pathogenic factor like dampness or heat which disturbs the balance of the system. Additionally, allergy sufferers are often thought to have an underlying weakness of the lung or spleen system.

TCM tackles allergies with a combination of herbs, diet and acupuncture. Specific herbs can help eliminate the wind from the patient's body, clear the nasal passages and sinuses and soothe itchy eyes and skin. Herbs help with the flow of Qi (typically deficient/stagnant when spring allergies occur) to put the body back in balance.

Some commonly used herbs include:



Glehnia Root (Bei Sha Shen / 北沙参) is sweet and slightly bitter in taste. It is a lung Qi tonifying herb which helps getting rid of lung heat causing itchy throat and dryness. It nourishes the lung Yin and moistens and clears the lungs by generating body fluids that will remove the Qi stagnation in the nose and sinuses. It also moistens the skin and will reduce skin dryness and itchiness.



Adenophora Root (Nan Sha Shen / 南沙参) grows throughout the mountains in East Asia. The root is used to release respiratory problems and suppress a Yin deficiency. Its properties will stimulate the Yin and tonify the Qi, thus help removing the Qi stagnation in the nose and sinuses.



Spirodela (Fu Ping / 浮萍) is a Chinese plant collected from June to September having an acrid and cold effect which expels wind from the body and reduces swelling. It promotes sweating and helps to push pathogens to the exterior. It suppresses itchy skin symptoms. Spirodela also drains fluids in the upper body helps to reduce edema and fluid swelling around the sinuses thus relieving symptoms.

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Allergies are often related to an excessive mucus production. Mucus is related to the digestive/spleen system, hence a healthy digestion may prevent sensitive people from developing allergic symptoms. Sweets, dairy, chicken products and cold foods increase mucus and should therefore be avoided. Certain foods soothe the lungs and can provide relief, such as almonds, pears, honey, and loquats.

Additionally, acupuncture has been proven effective in treating allergies and providing relief, especially in combination with herbal therapy. By targeting specific acupoints, acupuncture increases the protective Qi in the lungs, strengthens the immune system and calms the body's overreaction to the allergens. The Annals of Internal Medicine reported on a 2013 study done at Charité-University Medical Center, Berlin, Germany in which allergy sufferers who received acupuncture required less antihistamine medication. Several studies have documented acupuncture's effectiveness for relieving headaches, a frequent allergy symptom.

Thanks to its approach in viewing the whole person in concert with the environment, TCM offers natural allergy solutions for both symptom relief and long-term adjustment.

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(www.tcm-shanghai.com/) Founder and
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Let's listen to someone
that experienced the
benefits



Julie S., a patient at Body & Soul

Medical Clinics, has been treated with a combination of acupuncture, cupping and Chinese herbs. She was surprised to find acupuncture so relaxing that she often fell asleep during treatment. Julie shares, "My symptoms improved greatly and I've been able to put aside my inhalers and pills. I couldn't believe that I could actually breathe well when the AQI went over 400 a few times!" She has become interested in learning more about TCM due to her personal experience and believes TCM will become more integrated with Western medicine. Julie will be looking for a TCM practitioner when she repatriates back to the U.S.